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ABSTRACT

Responding to the need for a validated school improvement process, the National Association of Secondary School Principals sponsored the development of the Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments (CASE) Information Management System (IMS). The CASE-IMS computer software profiles 34 district and school variables, including climate, satisfaction, and 6 student outcomes. Data can be compared with validated national standards and cross-group analyses comprised of student, teacher, and parent perceptions of climate and satisfaction. Variables are keyed to an extensive bank of school improvement interventions that can assist local school planning and decision-making. This monograph describes the system's major components and provides specific recommendations for managing the change process. Chapter 1 briefly describes the development of the CASE-IMS model, highlighting its conceptualization, instrumentation, piloting, and computerization phases. Chapter 2 details the school improvement process and outlines program management steps, including forming the school improvement management team, raising awareness, collecting baseline data, performing the assessment, interpreting the data, setting priorities and planning, organizing and coordinating task forces, and evaluating the improvement process. Chapter 3 describes how four pilot schools in Washington, Massachusetts, and Virginia demonstrated the feasibility of using CASE instruments and processes for managing change. Two appendices furnish ordering information and list characteristics of successful school improvement task forces. (MLH)

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COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

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CASE
INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM

Eugene R. Howard
AND
James W. Keefe

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The CASE-IMS School Improvement Process

EUGENE R. HOWARD
AND
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Keefe's professional experience includes junior high, senior high, and university teaching, and secondary school administration. He was a high school assistant principal and principal in Downey, Calif. He taught at the University of Southern California and Loyola Marymount University, both in Los Angeles. He joined the NASSP national staff in 1978. He has served on various national boards and committees and is the vice president of the Learning Environments Consortium, a regional network of schools in western United States and Canada.

Preface

THIS volume outlines a validated school improvement process using the CASE-IMS system. The Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments (CASE) Information Management System (IMS) is a total school management profiling and planning system that complements NASSP's already published School Climate and Satisfaction instruments. The CASE-IMS software profiles 34 district and school variables, including climate, satisfaction, and six student outcomes. Data from these measures can be compared with validated national standards and cross-group analyses made of student, teacher, and parent perceptions of climate and satisfaction.

CASE-IMS variables are keyed to an extensive bank of school improvement interventions that can aid in local school planning and decision making. A unique program feature permits users to change the value of any alterable variable to ask "what if" questions. For example: What would it take for your school to raise student achievement or satisfaction by 10 percent? The CASE-IMS program can help you pose and answer these types of questions.

The CASE-IMS was developed by NASSP's National Task Force on School Environments and has been stringently validated and field tested. The software will support planning and budgeting decisions, board presentations, and accreditation reports. In combination with the eight-step school improvement process described in this report, it is a state-of-the-art system for data-based, outcomes-based decision making.

E.R.H
J.W.K.

Introduction

TRADITIONALLY, schools have been resistant to comprehensive change because the needed instrumentation and manageable, well-defined processes for school improvement have not been available.

Responding to this need, NASSP has sponsored, for the past nine years, a small task force of experts dedicated to creating a comprehensive, computerized outcomes-based system for improving a school.

This system, called the Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments—Information Management System (CASE-IMS) is now available. The system consists of:

- Instruments for assessing 34 input, mediating, and output variables of a school environment
- Computer software for scoring response sheets and for interpreting data
- Procedures for predicting the effect of alternative paths of action on school outcomes
- Suggested interventions for positively affecting selected variables
- A step-by-step process for translating assessment information into significant school improvement projects.

The system is user-friendly, manageable, and effective.

This monograph describes the major components of the NASSP system and provides specific recommendations for managing the change process.

Chapter 1 provides a brief description of the development of the CASE-IMS Model. Development activities proceeded in four phases:

1. Conceptualization of an Interactive Model of the School Environment
2. Instrumentation (Developing Instruments To Assess the School Environment)
3. Piloting a School Improvement Process
4. Computerization of an Information Management System.

Chapter 2 details the process for school improvement and provides recommendations for managing that process. The steps for assessment, data interpretation, priority setting/planning, and implementation will be of special interest to administrators and others who must provide leadership for change.

Chapter 3 reports how four pilot schools demonstrated the feasibility of using CASE instruments and processes for managing change.

The NASSP Task Force on School Environments acknowledges the leadership role of the National Association of Secondary School Principals in the project. It also wishes to acknowledge the important contribution of six key individuals to the success of the initiative.

—Le Verne S. Collet and Carlos Mora of the University of Michigan, who computerized the CASE-IMS system

—Four principals who piloted the CASE school improvement process and validated its effectiveness:

Bryan M. (Mont) Bush, Graham Middle School, Bluefield, Virginia

Thomas DeBolt, Mills Godwin High School, Richmond, Virginia

Howard Gilmore, East Junior High School, East Weymouth, Massachusetts

Larry Norwood, Capital High School, Olympia, Washington

CHAPTER 1

How the CASE-IMS Model Was Developed

IN 1982, the National Association of Secondary School Principals convened a Task Force on School Climate to investigate the available literature and instrumentation in this domain. After considerable deliberation and review, the task force decided that a new conceptual model and related instrumentation was needed for use in schools. The research and development agenda proceeded in four phases.

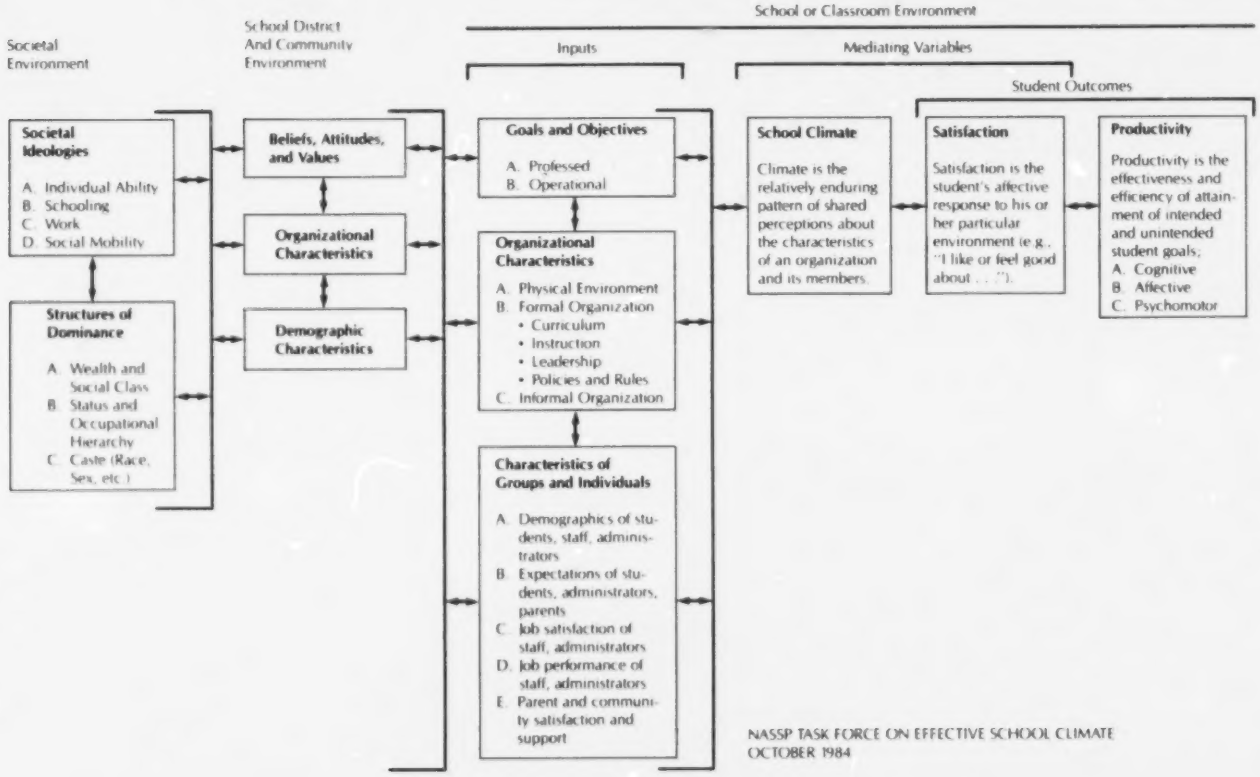
Phase 1: Conceptualization of an Interactive Model of the School Environment

During 1982 and 1983, task force members conducted an extensive literature search to consider what others had already accomplished in defining and measuring school climate. As a result of this search, task force members concluded the following:

1. That although much had been accomplished, there was still a need for a precise definition of school climate and valid instrumentation for use in schools
2. That a school's climate should be investigated in the broader setting of the total school environment
3. That climate and satisfaction were different concepts and should be separately assessed
4. That the highly interactive nature of the variables in any model of school environment must be recognized
5. That new instruments must be developed based on this broad concept of the school environment.

Early products of the literature review were precise definitions of components of the school environment, including climate and satisfaction, and an "Interactive Model of the School Environment—With School Climate and Satisfaction as Mediating Variables." (See Figure 1.) School climate was defined as "the relatively enduring pattern of shared perceptions (by teachers, students, and parents/community members) of the school and of its members"; i.e., the perceptions of the culture of the school. Satisfaction was defined as

Figure 1
An Interactive Model of the School Environment
(With School Climate and Satisfaction as Mediating Variables)


Societal Environment
School District And Community Environment
School or Classroom Environment
Inputs
Mediating Variables
Student Outcomes
Societal Ideologies
A. Individual Ability
B. Schooling
C. Work
D. Social Mobility
Structures of Dominance
A. Wealth and Social Class
B. Status and Occupational Hierarchy
C. Caste (Race, Sex, etc.)
Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values
Organizational Characteristics
Demographic Characteristics
Goals and Objectives
A. Professed
B. Operational
Organizational Characteristics
A. Physical Environment
B. Formal Organization
• Curriculum
• Instruction
• Leadership
• Policies and Rules
C. Informal Organization
Characteristics of Groups and Individuals
A. Demographics of students, staff, administrators
B. Expectations of students, administrators, parents
C. Job satisfaction of staff, administrators
D. Job performance of staff, administrators
E. Parent and community satisfaction and support
School Climate
Climate is the relatively enduring pattern of shared perceptions about the characteristics of an organization and its members.
Satisfaction
Satisfaction is the student's affective response to his or her particular environment (e.g., "I like or feel good about . . .").
Productivity
Productivity is the effectiveness and efficiency of attainment of intended and unintended student goals;
A. Cognitive
B. Affective
C. Psychomotor

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OCTOBER 1984

"an individual's response to his or her environment at a given point in time." The job satisfaction of school employees and the satisfaction of parents and other community members with the school were seen as components of school culture. The satisfaction of students was seen both as an element of school culture and as one outcome measure of school effectiveness.

This model was published in an *NASSP Bulletin* article (Keefe, Kelley, and Miller, 1985).

Phase 2: Instrumentation

During the second phase of the task force's work, climate and satisfaction instruments were developed and validated for use in middle level and senior high schools.

The climate instruments were developed at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and at Western Michigan University by task force chairman Edgar Kelley and several colleagues. This work was supported by grants from the Layman Fund (a research fund of the University of Nebraska), and by NASSP.

Instruments to measure satisfaction were developed by task force member Neal Schmitt and his colleagues at Michigan State University. The work was funded by NASSP. In accordance with the conceptual model (Figure 1), satisfaction of staff and patrons was considered an *input* to school climate, and satisfaction of students as an *output* to the total school environment.

At this stage, NASSP director of research James Keefe proposed that the task force identify the most significant variables and develop an information management system (IMS) to flesh out its Interactive Model of the School Environment. A new round of literature searches and position papers resulted in the identification of more than 100 variables for consideration in a formal field research project (including efficiency or cost effectiveness).

The early draft of the IMS model, including the climate and satisfaction instruments, contained 94 variables. Between 1986 and 1988 these variables were subjected to various pilot studies.

In 1988, Schmitt and Keefe collaborated in a national validation study of the CASE-IMS Model. This study supported the general framework of the conceptual model and the central role of mediating variables in understanding and interpreting the model. The CASE Information Management System (IMS) that emerged consisted of:

- Two district and community demographic dimensions
- Twenty-four school input variables
- Two climate variables (teacher climate and student climate)

- Six student outcome variables
- A separate composite measure of cost effectiveness.

The original 94 variables had been reduced to 34. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2
Information Management System Variables in the NASSP Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments (CASE) Model

The variables listed were identified by NASSP's Task Force on Effective School Climate based on the findings of a national validation study of the CASE Model (Schmitt and Doherty, 1988).

School District and Community Environment

1. Population of the area in which the school is located
2. Percentage of school-age children in the area served by the school

School Input Variables

3. Governance: public or private, church-related or not
4. Percentage of minorities enrolled in the school
5. Number of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches
6. Percentage of students in remedial programs
7. Number of activities for which budgeted resources are available
8. Number of elective courses in the curriculum
9. Average per-pupil expenditure (exclusive of capital outlay)
10. Principal's attitude toward change
11. Performance of the school's administrative team
12. Average teacher salary
13. Student-teacher ratio
14. Percentage of school employees who are professionals
15. Number of transfers in and out of the school
16. Average daily attendance
17. Number of students whose primary language is English

Figure 2 Continues

Figure 2 Continued

18. Principal perceptions of autonomy of action in the district
19. Principal perceptions of participation in school decisions
20. Number of students enrolled in the school
21. Nature of student dress rules in the school
22. Nature of student employment rules in the school
23. Importance of 14 selected school goals
24. Teacher satisfaction (NASSP Teacher Satisfaction Survey)
25. Teacher perceptions of autonomy of action in the district or school
26. Teacher perceptions of participation in school decisions

School Climate

27. Teacher Climate (NASSP School Climate Survey)
28. Student Climate (NASSP School Climate Survey)

Student Outcomes

29. Total achievement (combined reading and mathematics scores)
30. Percentage of students receiving disciplinary referrals
31. Percentage of students passing all courses
32. Student satisfaction (NASSP Student Satisfaction Survey)
33. Student self-efficacy (Brookover Self-Concept of Ability scale)
34. Percentage of students completing the school year (not dropping out)

Phase 3: Piloting a Change Process

By June of 1987 another need became apparent. Many of the principals who had participated in piloting the instruments experienced difficulty in translating the results of their assessments into specific school improvement plans. Many had generated useful assessment information but did not know how best to use it.

At this point, task force member Eugene Howard of the Colorado Department of Education acquainted the (renamed) Task Force on School Environments with work he had completed as director of

Colorado's School Improvement and Leadership Unit. As a part of that state's School Climate Improvement Project, an eight-step process for school improvement had been developed and widely used. The task force agreed to sponsor a project to demonstrate how school principals might use this process to translate CASE-IMS data into effective school improvement plans and activities.

In response to a request from NASSP for participants, five principals who had already gathered CASE data volunteered to pilot the eight-step process. Four of the principals completed the project. The accomplishments of these four schools are detailed in Chapter 3.

Phase 4: Computerization of the CASE-IMS

In the spring of 1989, NASSP contracted with Le Verne Collet and Associates at the University of Michigan to computerize the CASE-IMS. The programs developed by Collet and his colleagues Carlos Mora and Jody Schiesser are described in Chapter 2.

Principals who use the computerized model together with the eight-step change process, or a reasonable variation thereof, will find that substantial numbers of staff members, students, parents, and other community leaders can be successfully engaged in comprehensive school improvement.

CHAPTER 2

A Process for School Improvement

THE eight-step process outlined below was successfully demonstrated by the four pilot schools to be a useful vehicle to translate the CASE-IMS model into action.

In addition to this report, two other publications can serve as resources for leaders of schools undergoing or contemplating system-wide change. In 1985, CADRE, a professional organization dedicated to school climate and leadership improvement, published *School Climate Improvement: Leadership and Process* (Howard, 1985), a book of case studies that detailed how the eight-step process functioned in diverse education settings.

Two years later, the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation published *Handbook for Conducting School Climate Improvement Projects* (Howard, Howell, and Brainard, 1987) which described in detail how the eight-step process can be used to support comprehensive school improvement.

The sections of this chapter describe the eight steps for using CASE-IMS data for school improvement.

Step 1: The School Improvement Management Team

Managing school improvement is a long-term, complex, demanding process. The process, however, functions smoothly if tasks are shared by management team members and other leaders. The school improvement management team (SIMT) is not an advisory group. Its function is to plan, coordinate, and manage the change process. In some schools, an existing leadership group such as the principal's cabinet may be expanded to assume the new responsibilities associated with comprehensive change.

Individuals should be invited to join the management team on the basis of their commitment to school improvement, their proven leadership ability, their willingness to work, and their unique talents. Members may be staff members, students, parents, or community-based leaders. It is not a good idea to include negatively-oriented persons on the SIMT in order to gain their support for the change.

They usually impede rather than contribute to progress. Initially the SIMT might be composed of:

- A teacher-leader, who can organize and manage staff development activities
- The student council president and the faculty sponsor
- A person with expertise in group dynamics and communications
- An expert in research and technology who can assist with data analysis, presentation, and interpretation
- One or two more teacher-leaders with a reputation for innovative teaching.

At a later stage (Step 6), task force leaders should join the SIMT. Prior to the SIMT's first meeting, the principal should prepare a brief Statement of Purpose outlining the responsibilities of the team. This list of responsibilities should include:

- Informing parents, staff, and students about the purposes of the process and its intended outcomes (Step 2)
- Collecting baseline data on the CASE-IMS outcome variables (Step 3)
- Conducting the assessment, and reporting and interpreting the data on the 34 CASE-IMS variables (Step 4)
- Performing a "What If" analysis and obtaining from the CASE-IMS suggestions for appropriate school improvement interventions (Step 5)
- Planning and managing the priority setting/planning workshop (or workshops) (Step 5)
- Organizing and coordinating the work of three to five school improvement task forces (Steps 6 and 7)
- Conducting annual evaluations of the school's improvement efforts (Step 8).

Step 2: Awareness Raising

Prior to administering the assessment instruments, the SIMT should sponsor a series of awareness-raising activities. These activities are designed to acquaint staff members, students, parents, and key community leaders with the team's expectations in using the CASE-IMS Model, and the eight-step process.

Activities might include:

- Staff development sessions designed to enhance staff understanding of the CASE-IMS Model and the eight-step process
- Awareness-raising meetings for parents and community leaders

- Information disseminated through community newspapers, the school newspaper, and special publications
- Distribution of reprints of CASE-IMS journal articles to staff members and parents, students, and community-based leaders (See Keefe, Kelley, and Miller, 1985; Keefe and Kelley, 1990)
- Presentations by members of the SIMT to community organizations such as service clubs
- Distribution of copies of this monograph to key staff members.

Step 3: Collecting Baseline Data

Data on the six outcome variables can be collected independently or derived from the CASE-Information Management System (IMS), as follows:

- *Total Achievement*: Items 97 and 98 on the Principal Questionnaire
- *Percentage of Students Receiving Discipline Referrals*: Item 81 on the Principal Questionnaire
- *Percentage of Students Passing All Courses*: Item 94 on the Principal Questionnaire
- *Student Self-Efficacy (Brookover Self Concept of Ability Scale)*: The mean of student responses to Items 1-8 on the CASE-IMS Student Report Form
- *Percentage of Students Completing the School Year (Not Dropping Out)*: A percentage calculated from responses to Items 93 and 95 on the Principal Questionnaire
- *Student Satisfaction*: The means of students' responses as reported on eight sub-scales of the Student Satisfaction Survey.

Outcomes are collected as a regular part of the CASE-IMS process. These data constitute the baseline and benchmark data that will enable the SIMT, each year, to measure the impact of the school's improvement efforts.

Staff, students, and parents may expect that as the quality of the school environment improves, outcome variables as measured by the CASE instruments will be positively affected.

Step 4: Assessment

The current CASE-IMS system has seven instruments:

- School Climate Survey (55 items) to assess the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents about 10 characteristics of the school and its members.

- Teacher Satisfaction Survey (56 items) to measure teacher perceptions on nine dimensions of job satisfaction.
- Student Satisfaction Survey (46 items) to collect data on eight dimensions of student satisfaction with school.
- Parent Satisfaction Survey (58 items) to assemble parent perceptions on nine dimensions of school operation and services.
- Teacher Report Form (23 items) collects data on teacher perceptions of school/district goals, teacher autonomy, and teacher participation in decision making. Both NCS and SCANTRON forms are available.
- Student Report Form (8 items) collects student responses to the Brookover Self Concept of Ability (academic self-concept) scale. Both NCS and SCANTRON forms are available.

Survey instruments and machine-scorable answer sheets are available from NASSP (see Appendix A). These instruments collect data on 34 district and school variables, including the 6 student outcomes variables. (See Figure 2 for a complete listing.) Conducting the assessment is usually delegated to appropriate members of the SIMT.

It is the responsibility of the principal or headmaster to complete the Principal Questionnaire. He or she may wish to delegate portions of this task to members of the SIMT. A Report Form is provided in the assessment package.

The Teacher Report Form asks questions about teachers' priorities, perceived degree of autonomy, and participation in decision making. An efficient way to collect this information is to ask teachers to complete the form in a faculty meeting called for that purpose.

The Student Report Form assesses student self-concept of ability. One efficient way to collect this information is to ask teachers to administer the form in homeroom or adviser groups, or in classes serving all students such as physical education or English.

The satisfaction and climate surveys are administered to all teachers and representative groups of students and parents.

Detailed instructions for entering data and scoring the answer sheets are provided in the CASE-IMS User's Manual, which is part of the assessment software package.

Resources needed for producing reports are:

1. An IBM-PC or compatible microcomputer system; i.e., a computer, disk drive(s), monitor, and printer. The printer must be IBM compatible.
2. MS-DOS version 3.0 or later
3. The NASSP software package

4. *Either* optical scanning equipment that can read the answer sheets *or* a skilled keyboard operator to enter manually all data from the answer sheets, *or* commercial scoring from the Western Michigan University Evaluation Center, in Kalamazoo.

Step 5: Interpreting the Data

Translating the data generated by the assessment into a form that can be used for shared decision making is a key step in the process.

The information managed by the CASE-IMS program is contained in a database derived from a school's responses to the various CASE surveys. The system has a built-in tutorial and accompanying manual.

The CASE-IMS software includes two related programs. The first program provides data collection and analyses of CASE variables, with the analyses keyed to a bank of potential intervention strategies. The second program permits simulated alteration of the CASE variables; i.e., a user is able to change the values of all *alterable variables* (not fixed variables like population) to identify resources or intervention points that would likely improve the effectiveness of a school.

The CASE-IMS program was designed to assist in two important tasks: identification of a school's strengths and problems, and planning school improvement projects to positively affect selected variables.

1. Identification of Strengths and Problems: The program supports assessment by providing easy-to-read graphic displays of a school's performance on each of the CASE indicator variables. It is possible, for example, to compare the mean scores *across* different stakeholder groups (i.e., students and teachers, or teachers and parents) on variables such as climate that are common to both groups. The program can provide a comprehensive printout of the mean scores on the selected variables for each of the groups being compared. It explains the significance of the differences between means for users interested in statistical comparisons. If a school also collects information about the grade level, sex, or ethnic group of the survey respondents, these variables may be used to make comparisons *within* stakeholder groups (e.g., male vs. female teachers).

2. Planning School Improvement Projects: School leaders can use the CASE-IMS program to assist with planning for school improvement in two different ways. First, the system provides an "interventions command" that will suggest a number of possible actions that a school might take to improve its performance on variables with high potential for positively influencing outcomes. Second, it provides a "What If" analysis that will predict the effect of demographic trends and/or planned changes on student outcomes.

- *Interventions Command*. The interventions command causes the program to compare your school's scores with the national norm information. The program will list all 34 variables in nine blocks corresponding to your school's level of performance. You can then obtain suggested interventions for each variable. These interventions are "experientially validated;" i.e., they are based on the empirical or clinical experiences of experts in school improvement. (These are merely *suggestions to consider*. No guarantee exists that particular suggestions work in any given school. Each school must judge the appropriateness of each suggested intervention.)
- *What If Command*. The "What If" analysis uses statistical path equations stored in the CASE database to estimate the change in any selected output variable. For example, what would happen to student satisfaction and student achievement if a school were able to improve the overall school climate score of teachers by an amount equal to the national-norm standard deviation of that variable? What if a school changed the emphasis on school goals, the elective program, the student-teacher ratio, the budgeted resources, the level of teacher satisfaction? What if it changed all these variables AT THE SAME TIME? What would it take for a school to raise student achievement or satisfaction by 10 percent? The CASE-IMS program can help pose and answer these types of questions.

  The equations can also be used to estimate the future effects of continuing demographic trends over which the staff has no control. For example, what is likely to happen to student performance if a current trend of minority enrollment increasing by 10 percent per year were to continue for five years? The program can also estimate the combined effects of demographic trends and planned changes. (The predicted effects of these planned changes may be quite small, but even small growth is preferable to doing nothing.)

The SIMT is responsible for summarizing and interpreting the data so that they can be used by staff members, student leaders, parents, and others for priority setting and planning. Information sheets summarizing the findings might include:

1. A list of those variables perceived by various groups as strengths and weaknesses (problems)
2. A list of potential interventions, as suggested by the CASE-IMS program, for each variable perceived to be a priority
3. A summary of the "What If" analysis indicating which input/mediating variables, if positively affected by interventions, would be most likely to affect each of the six outcome variables.

In data interpretation and priority setting, school planners should avoid relying on a "deficit model." The tendency is to think in terms of remedying problems. Instead, whenever appropriate, plans should build on successes. The relationships among student outcomes, school climate, and any particular intervention strategy are usually interactive. Improvement in a defined area of intervention will often spill over into change in climate or effectiveness.

Relying exclusively on *problem* solving may result in some improvement and lower stress. It will not, however, produce excellence. Peaks of excellence in a school are created by doing better what is already being done well.

Step 6: Priority Setting and Planning

Priority setting and planning are processes that ideally involve the total faculty, other key staff members, parent and community leaders, and student leaders. It is a somewhat lengthy, but important process. The process, which usually functions best in a workshop setting, is designed to accomplish three objectives:

Workshop Objective 1: To designate, for each of the variables considered as possible priorities, from three to six interventions perceived by workshop participants to have high potential for positively affecting the variable.

Workshop Objective 2: To achieve substantial agreement on which variables should be designated as priorities for school improvement for the next one to three years. (Three to six variables are selected.) Positively rated as well as problem variables should be considered.

Workshop Objective 3: To convene school improvement task forces to plan and manage activities related to each high priority variable selected.

These objectives can be accomplished in from six to eight hours of workshop time. The time may be scheduled in several two or three-hour sessions at an in-school or external retreat setting. A sample outline of activities for such a workshop is shown in Figure 3.

Suggestions for operating a successful workshop include the following:

- Prepare presentations and hand-out materials carefully. It is easy to overwhelm participants with more information than they can handle.
- Provide enough time in the workshop so that participants do not feel pressured.
- Structure small groups so that none will have more than seven members. Five are ideal. Organize this by assigning people to

Figure 3
Priority Setting/Planning Workshop—Activities

Minutes	Activity	Responsibility	Mode
20	Introductory Comments, Objectives, Structure of Workshop	Workshop Coordinator and Principal	Large Group
40	What the Data Say—Variables Perceived as Strengths and Weaknesses (Problems)	Member, SIMT	Large Group
40	What the Data Mean—Implications and Applications and Interpretations	Small Group Leaders	Small Groups (5-7) one group for each variable perceived as a problem
40	Reports from Small Groups and Discussion	Workshop Coordinator	Large Group
20	Suggested Interventions Related to Each Variable To Be Considered as a Possible Priority (Handouts—Lists from SIMT)	Member, SIMT	Large Group
40	Consideration of Additions to Lists of Suggested Interventions and Rank Ordering of Interventions	Small Group Leaders	Small Groups
40	Reports from Small Groups—Recommendations of High Priority Interventions	Workshop Coordinator	Large Group
40	Summary of "What If" Analysis	Member—SIMT	Large Group
20	Individual Selection of Highest Priority Variables (Each participant chooses FIVE. Use ballots or "Spend the Dot" technique)**	Each Participant	Large Group
30	Tallying of Ballots (Not needed if "Spend the Dot" technique is used)	Tallying Committee	Large Group
20	Announcement of 3-5 priority variables. Description of How Task Forces Will Operate. Invitation to Participants To Volunteer for Task Forces.	Principal	Large Group
15	Volunteering for Task Forces. Participants complete 3 × 5 cards indicating their first and second choices for participation in a task force. (Participants may choose not to volunteer.)	Each Participant	Large Group
10	Adjournment and Comments re Next Steps	Principal	Large Group

**See page 22

groups in accordance with their first and second choices or by letting people choose their group but limiting group size to seven.

- Structure small groups so that each has at least one parent/community leader and one student.
- Follow your schedule carefully so that you can accomplish all the workshop's objectives.

Step 7: Task Force Organization and Coordination

Following the priority setting/planning workshop, the SIMT completes two important tasks:

1. Prepares, for each priority variable, a list of school improvement interventions recommended during the workshop.
2. Appoints members to each of the task forces.

Task force *leaders* are either appointed by the SIMT or elected by their membership.

At this point, a short (one or two-hour) training session should be offered to task force members and leaders so that they understand their roles in the implementation process. This training session should focus on the "Ten Characteristics of Successful School Improvement Task Forces," as found in Appendix B. This paper may be reproduced and used as a resource for the training session. All 10 characteristics are important to successful task force operation.

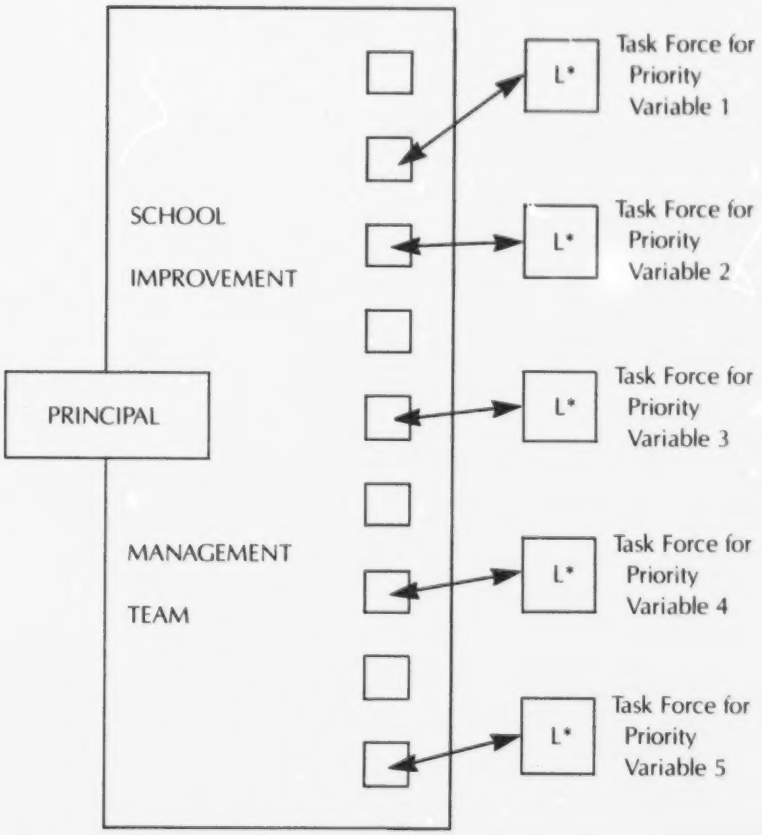
Additional training for task force members is highly desirable during the year that follows. Training in planning, communications, shared decision making, project management, expediting, managing meetings, and process evaluation can contribute to effective task force operation.

Task forces assume responsibility for planning and implementing activities to affect a single significant variable relating to school improvement. They should be viewed as long-term (two or three years) organizational structures. Figure 4 shows the organizational relationship between the SIMT and the task forces. Membership on task forces may be expected to change as projects are completed and new projects take their place.

The SIMT may wish to recommend that some existing committees be terminated so that faculty members and other leaders will have time to assume new duties related to the improvement process.

Three important responsibilities of the SIMT at this stage are to coordinate and support the work of the task forces; to inform the staff, students, parents, key community leaders, and central office administrators of progress being made in the eight-step process; and

Figure 4
Organizational Structure for
Managing the CASE—IMS Improvement Process



Each task force plans, administers, and evaluates one set of school improvement activities related to a high priority CASE-IMS variable.

Task force leaders represent their task forces on the School Improvement Management Team

L* = Task Force Leader

to provide staff development to support the interventions being implemented.

Step 8: Impact Evaluation and Re-Assessment

Each year the SIMT should conduct an evaluation of the impact of the school improvement process on the six CASE-IMS student

outcome variables: total achievement, disciplinary referrals, self-efficacy, course success, school year completion, and student satisfaction. The same CASE-IMS instruments and procedures used to obtain baseline data (Step 2) are used again for these evaluations. The results are reported to central office administrators, the public, the staff, parents, and other interested community leaders.

SIMTs that effectively implement the eight-step school improvement process should be able to report annual improvements in student outcome variables. A complete re-assessment of priorities should take place every 3 to 5 years.

(The CASE-IMS process is also compatible with assessment and school improvement processes required by the regional accrediting associations.)

CHAPTER 3

Four Pilot Schools

Capital High School—Olympia, Wash.
Principal: Larry Norwood
Vice Principal: Douglas Heay

East Weymouth (Mass.) Junior High School
Principal: Howard Gilmore

Graham Middle School, Bluefield, Va.
Principal: Bryan M. (Mont) Bush

Mills Godwin High School, Richmond, Va.
Principal: Thomas DeBolt
Assistant Principal: Pat Shackelford

EACH of the four pilot schools in the CASE follow-up project offered a unique setting for demonstrating a comprehensive improvement process. Capital is a large urban high school; East Weymouth and Mills Godwin are suburban; Graham is rural-small town.

The schools have in common leaders with reputations for quality educational programs and with strong commitment to implement systemwide improvements.

Project Planning and Initial Training

The project began in November of 1987 with a planning-training workshop at NASSP headquarters in Reston, Virginia. Each principal was provided with materials describing the eight-step process, and developed preliminary plans for using that process, or one like it, to translate CASE data into improvement activities. Following the workshop, each principal developed more detailed action plans. Project director Eugene Howard conferred with each of the development teams, both in person or by telephone, and made suggestions for strengthening the planning processes.

Awareness Raising

The early months of the project were devoted to awareness-raising activities in all four schools. At Mills Godwin, for example, the key activity consisted of a series of structured interviews to identify "alterable elements and desirable interventions"—those characteristics of the school, which, if changed, would result in a more positive school environment. Members of the management team personally interviewed faculty members, key members of the support staff, student leaders, and parent leaders. The results of the interviews were summarized and communicated to the planning groups.

Other project schools employed more conventional awareness-raising approaches such as publications, parent and faculty meetings, and structured discussions.

The Interventions Packet and Matrix of Climate-Satisfaction Descriptors

During the early months of the project, the project director, with input from the principals, developed an "Interventions Packet"—a Matrix of Climate and Satisfaction Descriptors and 13 Interventions Idea Sheets.

The matrix was designed to show the interrelatedness of climate and satisfaction descriptors. Each of the 13 clusters of descriptors was the subject of deliberation by one planning group in a priority setting/planning workshop. How the matrix and the Interventions Idea Sheets were used is detailed in the following sections.

Management Team Formation

Each school organized a school improvement management team (SIMT) to plan and direct the over-all project and to provide leadership and support for the task forces to be formed later.

East Weymouth's management team is large—23 members representing every department and teacher constituency within the school. Provision was made for close communication and cooperation among the management team, the parent council, and the student council.

The first task of the management team was to consider CASE survey items and the Interventions Idea Sheets and to develop definitions for each of the 13 descriptors identified by the matrix (Figure 5). These definitions were packaged with the interventions sheets to provide 13 workshop groups with the basic information they needed to make priority decisions.

The second task of the team was to plan the priority setting workshop and subsequent planning activities.

Figure 5
Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments
Climate and Satisfaction Descriptors

Interventions Idea Sheet #:	School Climate	Parent Satisfaction	Teacher Satisfaction	Student Satisfaction
#1	C-1 Teacher-Student Relationships	P-4 Teachers	T-6 Co-Workers	S-1 Teachers
#2	C-2 Security and Maintenance	P-6 School Bldgs Supplies & Maintenance	T-8 School Bldgs Supplies & Maintenance	S-5 (#24) Security S-7 School Bldgs Supplies & Maintenance
#3	C-3 Administration	P-8 School Adm.	T-1 Administration T-9 (#54)	S-6 (#33) S-8 (#45)
#4	C-4 Student Academic Orientation		T-4 Student Respons.	S-3 Schoolwork
#5	C-5 Student Behavioral Values	P-7 Student Discipline	T-4 Student Respons.	S-5 Student Discipline
#6	C-6 Guidance	P-5 (#29, #30)		
#7	C-7 Student-Peer Relationships			S-2 Fellow Students
#8	C-8 Parent-Community-School Relationships	P-1 Parent Involvement	T-7 Parents & Community	
#9	C-9 Instr. Mgmt			
#10	C-10 Student Activ.	P-3 Student Activ.		S-4 Student Activ.
#11		P-2 Curriculum	T-5 Curriculum (#27)	S-3 Schoolwork (#14, #16)
#12			T-2 Compensation T-3 Opp. for Adv. T-4 Curr & Job Tasks	
#13		P-9 School Info. Services	T-9 Communication	S-8 Communication S-6 Decision Making Opportunities

The third and ongoing task of the SIMT was to provide support for the task forces that emerged from the planning process.

Priority Setting and Interventions Planning

At East Weymouth's workshop, each of the management team's 23 members provided leadership in the school's 13 planning teams (one for each descriptor). According to the principal, Howard Gilmore, "the interventions generated were worthwhile and reflective of energy and effort." "Great day! Tremendous enthusiasm by students and staff!" Each group reported its recommended interventions

list and all workshop participants voted on the 13 descriptors. Three (Student Behavioral Values, Student/Peer Relationships, and Security and Maintenance) were selected as school goals. A few months later, as a result of a careful analysis of the CASE survey information, a fourth goal (Student Academic Orientation) was added.

At the Graham Middle School priority setting/planning workshop (see Figure 6), the results of the CASE survey were reported, and small brainstorming/priority setting groups were formed. Each group was instructed to focus its deliberations on one set of climate or satisfaction descriptors (Figure 5). Using the Interventions Idea Sheets as references, each group brainstormed possible interventions relating to its assigned set of descriptors.

The report of Group 7 on Student-Peer Relationships is reproduced as Figure 7. The four recommendations of this group, together with recommendations from the other 12 groups, was the basis for action planning of four task forces formed after the workshop.

The other three schools in the project organized similar workshops. Larry Norwood, principal of Capital High School, reported the following procedure:

> We put people in small groups with staff, parents, and students in each group. We asked each of the groups to work on 3 or 4 of the 10 environmental areas, making sure that all 10 areas were covered. They were instructed to identify the current status of each area and then to ask "What **should** it be?" All information was recorded on butcher paper at each table.
>
> After some general discussion of each area, all the statements were taped to panels at the front of the room. Participants were given red dots and instructed to "vote" for the areas of greatest concern by sticking their dots on the butcher paper.

Task Force Organization and Management

School improvement task forces were organized in each of the four schools to consider the agreed-upon priorities.

At East Weymouth Junior High School, Principal Gilmore and his management team organized four task forces on these climate/satisfaction descriptors: student behavioral values, student-peer relationships, security and maintenance, and student academic orientation. Each task force developed action plans responsive to the interventions that had been recommended in the priority-setting workshop. For example, the Student/Peer Relations task force developed plans for an adviser-advisee program and a Big Brother/Big Sister program. The Student Academic Orientation Task Force focused on

Figure 6
Graham Middle School
COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS
WORKSHOP
Saturday, January 23
9:00 a.m./School Library

Parents, Students, and Faculty:

Thanks so much for giving up this beautiful Saturday morning to assist our school in this most important CASE Research Project. Your ideas and suggestions are most important in order that we may pursue changes in our school which will be enjoyable and which will strengthen the overall climate of our school.

Objectives:

1. To acquaint workshop participants with the overall school improvement process.
2. To evaluate and to identify interventions which will have an impact on improving the quality of our school environment.
3. To form task forces, plan, implement, and to evaluate improvement projects.

Agenda:

1. An overview of the workshop and workshop objectives.
2. Report of outcomes of the CASE assessment.
3. Small group activities.
4. Reports from small groups.
5. Priority setting.
6. Task forces.
7. Evaluation of workshop.

Thank you for your assistance.
Bryan M. Bush

fostering student independence, strengthening the school's homework policies, and broadening the rewards program.

Similarly, four task forces were formed at Graham Middle School. Two days after the workshop, Graham's principal, Mont Bush, and two SIMT members met to categorize and refine the interventions ideas recommended at the workshop. Recommendations clustered into four major categories:

- Student involvement in school improvement activities
- Improving the school's activity programs
- Enhancing parent-school and community relations
- Strengthening staff development, curriculum, and guidance.

Figure 7
Graham Middle School
COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS
INTERVENTIONS IDEA SHEET 7
Report of Group 7

Student-Peer Relationships

7.1 To involve the uninvolved by having 100 percent of students in a minimum of two activities, such as support groups, clubs, and sports.

7.2 To spotlight a different group each month in an assembly with additional recognition through bulletins, the annual, and the newspaper.

7.3 To expand the orientation program for new students by having a big brother or big sister to guide, to be a sounding board, and to act as a student counselor. The big brother/big sister program will also reach out to shy, troubled, uninvolved children.

7.4 To form a Kids Club—"Kids in Divorce," a "Kids with Braces" Club, a New Student Club, and a Grief Club for students who have lost a loved one.

The SIMT communicated the categorized recommendations to the faculty, parents, and students who had participated in the workshop. The team then asked for volunteers to join the task forces. From a total of 30 faculty members, 20 volunteered. A volunteer was appointed as leader of each task force and automatically became a member of the SIMT.

As a first step, each task force adopted a title descriptive of its major area of responsibility.

Project KIDS: Kids Involved in the Development of School
Project MACS: Maximizing Activities and Clubs
Project CABS: Community Awareness for Better Schools
Project COPE: Catching Opportunities Pertaining to Education

Each task force then reviewed the revised Interventions Idea Sheets from the workshop. "Their task at this point," according to Bush, "was to respond to suggestions for interventions made during the workshop by identifying those interventions which, in their judgment, they could manage and which would most positively impact the school's environment."

Once these interventions had been identified, process objectives were defined and action plans developed for each process objective.

An example of one action plan, for a KIDS task force objective, is reproduced as Figure 8.

At Capital High School, the three major concerns identified at the priority setting workshop resulted in the formation of three initial task forces: Academic Preparation, Student Discipline, and Curriculum. Between October 1989 and April 1990 the number of task forces grew from 3 to 27. Currently (1990-1991), 26 task forces are operating.

Principal Norwood describes the task force concept as "an ongoing, never-ending process." Interventions included:

- Development of a new counseling model
- Peer tutoring for special education students
- Two new interdisciplinary studies courses (BioEthics and U.S. History/American Literature).

Figure 8
GRAHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL
Task Force Plan of Action

"Kids Involved in the Development of School"

Objective 2: Graham Middle School will strengthen its program of "involving the uninvolved."

ACTIVITIES	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
I. Involve each student in a minimum of two activities	10/88 Ongoing	All TAPS* Teachers
II. An assembly by each club for all students monthly	9/88 Ongoing	All Clubs
III. TAPS program will include "Adopt a Friend"	3/88	All TAPS groups
IV. TAPS program will include "Academic Excellence" recognition monthly	3/88	All TAPS groups

Evaluation Criteria for Objective
—All students will be surveyed to ensure involvement in at least two activities.
—Teacher observation that no student is "alone."
—Posted "Academic Excellence" monthly.

*TAPS = adviser-advisee groups

At Mills Godwin High School, each task force's work was coordinated by a task force leader, typically a teacher, who was responsible to the SIMT. Interventions were recommended to the SIMT and action plans implemented. At each SIMT meeting, task force leaders give progress reports and receive suggestions and offers of support from SIMT members. Task force leaders and members also make periodic progress reports to faculty, student, and parent groups.

Mills Godwin's action planning process was energized by a carefully-formulated set of school goals as well as by CASE-generated data and Interventions Idea Sheets. These are some sample goal statements:

- Develop an Academic Incentive Program that focuses on the importance of academic achievement and good attendance.
- Increase the percentage of students succeeding in courses.
- Implement a school beautification program.

Interventions that directly reflected suggestions from the Interventions Idea Sheets included strengthening the school's reward system, expanding student participation in activities programs, and initiating schoolwide instruction in study skills. (These suggestions are now part of the CASE-IMS software.)

Process and Outcomes Evaluation

By June 1, 1991, all pilot school principals had reported evaluations of the eight-step process and their assessment of the impact of that process on various school quality indicators.

Process Considerations. All principals implemented the process as recommended, and reported that the process was manageable and effective. Principals observed that the key ingredients to successful implementation were adequate workshop time, careful review and application of CASE survey results in the planning stage, and substantial support and leadership for the task forces. Problems reported included difficulty in obtaining adequate inservice and planning time, convincing teachers to include parents and students in the process, helping teachers understand that the process is not confined to problem solving, and addressing some parents' frustration that their pet solutions were not accepted by the staff.

Some difficulty was also encountered in collecting data on an annual basis for all the CASE-IMS outcome measures and in obtaining total faculty cooperation in implementing schoolwide decisions (e.g., an adviser/advisee program and uniform homework policies).

All four principals reported that the use of task forces to implement improvements was highly effective. For example, each of Capital

High School's 26 task forces manages from two to six interventions each year. The list of improvements is long and impressive.

- The English Task Force increased speaking and writing experiences at all levels, initiated more frequent and positive feedback on writing assignments, and added a computer laboratory for English students.
- The Middle School to High School Transition Task Force improved communications between the levels, initiated a big brother/big sister program, and strengthened peer tutoring for incoming ninth graders.
- The Technology Task Force's work resulted in a full-blown IBM laboratory for the business department and another computer laboratory being added to the graphics department for layout, design, and printing.
- One outcome of the Social Studies Task Force was the initiation of a "Lumaphone" communications link between Capital High School and its sister school in Beijing.

Principal Norwood also reported that, as a result of the school's improvement activities over the past four years, staff members' perceptions of the accessibility and fairness of the administration have substantially improved.

Impact on Outcome Measures. Specific and positive impact was reported on the CASE-IMS indicators of quality.

Climate and Satisfaction: All schools reported consistent improvements in student, teacher, and parent climate and satisfaction, as measured by the CASE surveys.

Discipline: At Mills Godwin over a two-year period, the number of students referred to the office for "mischievous behavior" was reduced by 54 percent, and the number of referrals for major offenses was reduced by 42 percent. At Graham Middle School the percentage of students suspended decreased from 3 percent (1987) to 1.5 percent (1990).

Attendance: Student attendance, already high (95 percent plus), remained high in all schools. Mills Godwin reported an increase in teacher attendance from 93 to 97.5 percent during a four-year period.

Achievement: Achievement, as measured by standardized test scores and percentage of students earning high ("A" and "B") grades, was already high in all the schools at the beginning of the project, and it remained high.

One school, Mills Godwin, reported substantial increases in the percentage of students earning A and B grades (from 49 percent in 1985-86 to 62 percent in 1989-90). The percentage of students on the honor roll also increased (by 14.8 percent).

Principals' Observations. Comments on the process and outcomes have been uniformly positive.

- The process is great. East has and will continue to benefit as a school. (Howard Gilmore)
- At Graham Middle School our quest for excellence was inspired and nurtured by our involvement as a CASE Research school. The positive atmosphere of our school was an important factor in our selection as a Virginia Vanguard School. (Mont Bush)
- The eight step process works. Here at Godwin we have used the process, together with the CASE assessment instruments to make a positive impact on climate and satisfaction. (Thomas De Bolt)
- This is the first time that we have had real quality involvement of parents on an ongoing basis. Whatever the outcome of this project, it is proving to be a valuable experience for Capital High School. (Larry Norwood)

Final Considerations

Efficiency Analysis. The pilot schools completed but did not formally pilot the efficiency analysis (cost effectiveness) component of the CASE Information Management System. This supplementary analysis has been widely piloted in the state of Texas and elsewhere (Bessent et al., 1984). The analysis is accomplished by a proprietary program—Productivity Analysis Support System, or PASS for short.

PASS uses four output and five input measures that proved to be most predictive of cost effectiveness for the 223 schools in the NASSP national normative sample.

OUTPUT

1. Average Achievement for Reading (READING)
2. Average Achievement for Math (MATH)
3. Student Self-Image (SELF)
4. Student Satisfaction with Teacher (STUSAT)

INPUT

1. Average Percent of Students Present (ATTEND)
2. Expenditure per Pupil (EXPEND)

3. Percent of Pupils Not on Free or Reduced Lunch (PCTNONLUN)
4. Percent of Racial Majority in the School (PCTNONMIN)
5. Percent of Stability of Students (PCTSTABLE)

The efficiency measures are computed by a unique program, developed at the University of Texas, that relates multiple inputs to multiple outputs as shown in the following equation:

$$\text{Efficiency measures} = \frac{\text{Outputs}}{\text{Inputs}} \text{ to a maximum of 1 (or 100\%).}$$

The underlying assumption in these measures is that increases in any one or more resources (inputs) should, all other things being equal, result in improved educational outputs.

The efficiency analysis compares each school's patterns of outputs and inputs with all other schools in the analysis set and then selects the schools with the most *similar* patterns of input and output levels as a basis of comparison in computing the final efficiency values. This important attribute of the analysis means that schools with limited resources or significantly disadvantaged groups are compared only with similarly structured schools in determining their efficiency ratings. For further information on the PASS component of the CASE-IMS, contact task force member Howard Winesett, Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville, Florida 32207.

CASE-IMS Improvement Process. The four pilot schools have demonstrated that CASE-IMS information, when applied in conjunction with a systematic school improvement process, can stimulate significant school improvement. The schools also demonstrated that impact data can be consistently gathered.

The pilot schools did not have the sophisticated software for interpreting their data that is now available. (See pages 12-15.) The pilot principals utilized Interventions Idea Sheets instead of the computerized interventions bank and procedures now incorporated in the CASE-IMS. Nor did they have the "What If" procedures of the CASE-IMS in choosing interventions likely to have the most positive impact on the school's outcome variables. Indeed, the intervention strategies are now more precisely defined than during the pilot project's operation.

Setting goals for educational productivity and efficiency, planning for comprehensive assessment, and using assessment in a collaborative way to effect school improvements are fundamental to sound education practice. The needs of society and the increasing professionalism required of schools demand a systematic approach to school planning and improvement. Only a data-based, comprehensive, and collaborative approach will satisfy these imperatives.

The CASE-IMS systematic assessment and improvement process moves school management into the modern age. The CASE-IMS pilot project and the four pioneer schools described in this report give us great expectation that data-based planning and decision making will become commonplace in schools. If so, our students and our communities will surely be the beneficiaries.

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APPENDIX A

How To Order the CASE-IMS Instruments and Software

Order Form: COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

Code	Quantity	Item	Unit Price	Total
2139100		CASE-IMS Software and User's Manual (IBM-PC and Compatibles)	175.00	
2139007		Principal Questionnaire and Report Form—NCS	1.50	
2139002		Principal Questionaire and Report Form-SCANTRON	1.50	
2139009		Teacher Report Form—NCS*	7.00	
2139004		Teacher Report Form-SCANTRON*	7.00	
2139008		Student Report Form—NCS*	7.00	
2139003		Student Report Form-SCANTRON*	7.00	
2139005		Sampler Kit—CASE-IMS (one each of all system forms)	10.00	
2138710		Sampler Kit (Climate and Satisfaction Surveys only)	5.00	
2138701		School Climate Survey*	5.00	
2138702		Student Satisfaction Survey*	5.00	
2138703		Teacher Satisfaction Survey*	5.00	
2138704		Parent Satisfaction Survey*	5.00	
2138705		NCS Answer Sheets (Climate and Satisfaction Surveys)**	4.00	
2138712		Scantron Answer Sheets (Climate and Satisfaction Surveys)**	4.00	
2138706		Examiner's Manual (Additional copies)	3.00	
2138707		Technical Manual (Climate and Satisfaction Surveys only)	15.00	
2138708		Mainframe Scoring Package	135.00	
2138709		IBM-PC Scoring Package	95.00	
2138711		Apple II/e Scoring Package	95.00	

*Packages of 35

**Both Climate and Satisfaction on each answer sheet

†These scoring packages consist of the appropriate double-sided, double-density disk and a User's Manual. The disks are designed to function with a mainframe or mid-size computer, IBM-PC or compatibles, and Apple II/e. Users must prepare the optical scanner interface programs to produce the standard data file. The scoring packages generate reports for each of the six sets of data collected by the CASE instruments.

Commercial scoring is available from Western Michigan University, CASE Field Services, The Evaluation Center, Kalamazoo, Mich. 49008, (616) 387-5917. NCS answer sheets are *required* for commercial scoring.

Sampler Kit

- 1 Battery Summary
- 1 School Climate Survey
- 1 Teacher Satisfaction Survey
- 1 Student Satisfaction Survey
- 1 Parent Satisfaction Survey
- 1 1 NCS Answer Sheet
- 1 SCANTRON Sheet
- 1 Examiner's Manual

} (Climate and Satisfaction)

- 1 Principal Questionnaire (IMS)
- 1 Principal Report Form (IMS)
- 1 Teacher Report Form (IMS)
- 1 Student Report Form (IMS)
- 1 IMS User's Manual

How To Order:

- Orders from foreign countries except Canada will be billed shipping charges separately. Orders must specify delivery by air or surface mail.
- All orders without payment should be sent to NASSP, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, Va. 22091-1537.
- Canadian orders with payment should be sent to NASSP, P.O. Box 11010, Postal Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 2G5.
- American orders with payment should be sent to NASSP, P.O. Box 3250, Reston, Va. 22090-1250.

DISCOUNT RATES: 5-9 packages of Surveys in the same order: 10%; 10-19 packages, 15%; 20 or more packages, 20%.

NASSP is not responsible after 90 days for returns or claims for items not received.

Orders under $15 must be prepaid.

☐ Bill me ☐ MC ☐ Visa

(minimum credit card order $15)

Account Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

SUBTOTAL for items ordered $_____

4.5% sales tax (Virginia residents) $_____

Shipping/Handling if applicable (Shipping/handling charges within the U.S. are included) $_____

TOTAL $_____

☐ Check if this is first order for CASE

Purchase Order No. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

APPENDIX B

Ten Characteristics of Successful School Improvement Task Forces

by
EUGENE R. HOWARD

I. Definition:
A task force is a group of individuals who work together in a common effort to achieve agreed-upon objectives. It is a planning, working, and learning group, not a studying and recommending group. Unlike a committee, a task force does not think up things for other people to do. Rather, the task force is an action group. It has accepted an assignment to assume the responsibility for planning and implementing a set of school improvement activities. Task forces are composed of appropriate combinations of parents, staff members, and students. In staffing a task force, an attempt is made to match peoples' talents and interests to school improvement activities.

II. Ten Characteristics of Successful Task Forces:

1. The task force has developed a written action plan responsive to suggestions from the staff.
   - Basic components of an action plan include a stated objective, activities, name of person responsible for each activity, target dates, and the method of evaluating effectiveness of the activities and the project.
2. Each task force member has an assigned task.
3. Provision is made for continuous professional growth.
   - The task force maintains a professional library of materials related to its goals.
   - Task force members visit other schools and invite leaders from other schools to share ideas with them.
   - A portion of the agenda of each meeting is devoted to professional growth activities.
   - The task force plans professional growth activities for the total faculty.

4. Provision is made for periodic revision of the action plan and expansion of membership.
   - As task force members grow in ability, they will want to implement progressively more significant projects. (The plan matures as the people mature.)
   - As activities change, a need for new members may be generated.
   - Action plan modifications are submitted for approval.
5. The task force has received a clear delegation of authority from the principal.
   - Delegation can be made on the basis of the action plan (NOTE: if there is no plan, there is nothing to delegate.)
   - Initially, the principal may provide the task force with a charge statement.
6. The task force periodically reports on its progress to staff, parents, students, and to the school improvement committee.
7. The task force uses formative evaluation to improve its effectiveness, e.g.,
   - A process observer evaluates each task force meeting.
   - Formal evaluation sheets are used to evaluate workshops and conferences.
8. Task force leaders have received training in leadership skills (especially in planning, communications, group process, and organizing).
9. The task force leader closely monitors the progress of the plan and the work of each task force member by:
   - Expediting—making sure that agreed-upon tasks get done
   - Supporting—providing assistance when needed.
10. The task force is provided with a small operating budget.
    - Funds are needed for travel, materials,and inservice activities.
    - Funds can be re-allocated from already existing accounts.

By using school improvement task forces, the principal can increase the number of people involved in the process of improving the quality of the school. As involvement is expanded, faculty, parent, and student morale are improved and student attitudes, behavior, and achievement are enhanced.

Notes:

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